

**MANAGEMENT OF OBSTETRIC DIFFICULTIES—**Sixth Edition—Revised by J. Robert Willson, M.D., M.S., Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Temple University School of Medicine; Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Temple University Medical Center. The C. V. Mosby Company, 3207 Washington Blvd., St. Louis 3, Mo., 1961. 687 pages, with 323 text illustrations and one color plate, \$16.50.

In this new edition of a book that has been available now for nearly a quarter of a century the name of Titus has been dropped from the title page and it now truly represents the new author's views and practices at the Temple University Hospital. As this reviewer noted in these pages when describing the previous edition, the title of the book has always seemed a bit misleading. Certainly it includes many subjects not generally thought of as "difficulties" in obstetric practice, and large segments of the text have nothing directly to do with management. Actually it is a modified textbook that lacks the usual basic anatomy and physiology of reproduction, but it offers a few extras such as an opening section on infertility and a concluding section on the newborn infant contributed by Vaughan and Laupus of the Department of Pediatrics in the Medical College of Georgia. The material in between is fairly standard information about prenatal care, complications of pregnancy, labor and puerperium, and the usual obstetric operations. It is very well written, nicely illustrated, and reads easily.

A considerable number of minor revisions have been made in order to include newer concepts that have become fairly well established in the last decade. These relate to such things as the incompetent cervix, prediabetes, use of diuretic and hypotensive agents in pregnancy, and fetal electrocardiography. Other material has been deleted, many inferior illustrations have been replaced by better ones, and the length of the volume has been cut by 50 pages. Finally, it has been completely reset in a most attractive new typographical format that will cost the buyer only one-third more than the previous edition.

The author says this book is intended as a reference for practicing obstetricians and residents, emphasizing practical and useful procedures, rather than a general text for students. Whether it is a better investment than one of the standard textbooks is a question with different answers for different people, and your reviewer chooses not to sit in judgment.

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**CHILDBIRTH WITH HYPNOSIS—**William S. Kroger, M.D. Edited by Jules Steinberg. Doubleday & Company, Inc., 575 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York, 1961. 216 pages, \$3.95.

This book seems to be based on concepts regarding pregnancy and childbirth which are of increasing acceptance in enlightened medical circles, such as: (1) With relatively infrequent exceptions, the common discomforts and dysfunctions of the pregnant women in our Western culture arise from conscious and/or unconscious irrational fears and emotional conflicts related to femininity, pregnancy, childbirth, motherhood, etc. (2) Pharmacological relief of these symptoms, especially general anesthetics and sedatives during labor and delivery, can be within safe limits for the mother but produce crucial and permanent damage to the baby. (3) The willingly conscious active participation of the mother in the delivery of her baby can be a beneficial experience for her in a very personal and gratifying way, and also benefits the on-going important mother-child relationship.

The application of these concepts to obstetrics has produced a great variety of "methods" such as the Read Method of Natural Childbirth and the Psychoprophylactic

Method in the Soviet Union. These "methods" and their many variations differ primarily according to the individual doctor's understanding and orientation towards the relative importance of the conscious and unconscious emotional and psychic factors in the experience of labor pains and other discomforts of pregnancy and his techniques for dealing with these factors.

This book emphasizes the usefulness of *hypnotic* techniques in reducing the pathogenic irrational emotional and psychic factors in the expectant mother, reducing the amount of chemical anesthetics, analgesics and sedatives and enriching the entire experience for the mother.

Dr. Kroger's apparent goal is to have his patient come eagerly to labor, free of fear and in an hypnotically induced state of mind and body in which the patient is consciously aware and cooperative throughout the labor and delivery. He does *not* advocate an hypnotically induced amnesia for the pains. By the time she reaches labor the several months of psychotherapy, using hypnotic techniques, have actually altered her emotional reaction to the "pains." Instead of being frightening and unbearable, the pain stimuli are welcome indicators of an immensely gratifying experience. How successfully does he achieve this goal? His statistical references vary but at one place he says, "We have delivered several hundred mothers by either pure hypnosis or a combination of hypnosis and chemoanesthesia. About 20 to 25 per cent of these patients . . . were carried through the first and second stages of labor without analgesia or anesthesia. Fifty per cent of all our patients required only minimal amounts of sedation, usually near the end of the first stage. Local anesthesia was used for the episiotomy and repair. Even if you consider the remaining 25 per cent—and remember that this smaller group includes abnormal labors—failures, hypnotically speaking, of course, the results are still worth the effort. *All* of our patients benefit, to a degree, by learning about hypnosis, because they are better equipped to face the emotional trials of motherhood."

In overall style, this is a strange book authored by an M.D. and "edited" by an editor and writer for "trade publications." The cover is ostentatious and uncomfortably superlative regarding the contents. It is not a medical book. It is openly written to "you"—the expectant mother—who "deserves to be told everything that science is doing to protect her health and that of her child during childbirth."

He goes into great verbatim detail reporting his hypnotic and auto-hypnotic techniques and suggestions. So much so, that it frequently gives the impression of a do-it-yourself manual. He then warns the reader against using any part of the techniques without complete supervision and advice of a competent M.D. He includes many impressive testimonial letters from appreciative and enthusiastic patients. His general and more specific treatment of the subject of hypnosis has some merit but, as repeatedly recurs throughout the book, there is a kind of shallow glibness which is a distraction to a scientific minded reader.

His advocating the use of hypnosis as an adjunct to exploratory, uncovering psychotherapy is deceptively pat. He inadequately stresses the degree of specialized training and supervised experience that a conscientious doctor would insist upon before attempting the depth of psychotherapy Dr. Kroger seems to be claiming for his methods.

Anyone unfamiliar with the use of hypnotic techniques in general and specifically in obstetrics could find some enlightenment in this book, but if he is seeking an authoritative scientific understanding of modern theory and practice of medical hypnosis he should look elsewhere to augment this peculiarly directed book.

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